

U.S. CHANGES STRATEGY FOR PUERTO RICO

The United States government is now preparing a major shift in strategy on the question of Puerto Rico. Its implementation — which is already underway — poses one of the most serious challenges the independence movement has ever had to face.

Stung by the growing and unprecedented international support for Puerto Rican independence, and increasingly unable to deal with the legitimate national aspirations of the Puerto Rican people themselves, the Ford-Kissinger colonial regime has been compelled to devise a new scheme in order to maintain its stranglehold on its prized colonial possession.

The two parts of the strategy, put very simply, are intensified repression and a significant change in the "legal" status of Puerto Rico. Taken together, they offer an ugly and sobering picture of the desperate devices employed by dying colonialism.

Intensified Repression

The main target of this repression — which takes both a legal and military form — is the organized workers movement in Puerto Rico, especially the public workers who constitute 28.6% of the work force. The United Workers Movement (MOU), as the main independent workers organization, directly organized and led by Puerto Ricans, has been the particular object of imperialist wrath.

The repression has followed predictably fascist-like patterns: frame-ups of militant union leaders, use of the National Guard, FBI intervention in strikes, police brutality on the picket lines and the jailing of strike leaders and militants. A recent "law" passed by the puppet Puerto Rican legislature — the Personnel Law — is an attempt to eliminate all vestiges of collective bargaining for government employees and would abrogate all previously negotiated union contracts.

The colonial administration is using a variety of other devices to try to smash the Puerto Rican labor movement, a task in which the top leadership of the AFL-CIO have joined with glee. These have included attempts to use imperialist trade unions to combat independent unions — much the way the California growers have used the Teamsters to fight the Farmworkers. In fact, it is the very same Teamsters Union which is being used in Puerto Rico that way.

At the same time there has been stepped-up repression against the growing independence movement. This has ranged from intensive training of the colonial police in the latest techniques for suppression of popular dissent — "riot" control, political sabotage, new intelligence methodology — to more and more blatant acts of terror and provocation.

Changing Puerto Rico's Legal Status

Forced by the rising tide of international support and protest, the U.S. government has now decided that it must actively counter this trend. U.N. delegate Patrick Moynihan

made this clear last August with his desperate campaign of arm-twisting, political blackmail and diplomatic intimidation around the question of the Decolonization Committee report. But that was just a stop-gap action. The key to the U.S. design is to try to force the rest of the world to accept Puerto Rico's status as "an internal affair" of the U.S.

But this is an extremely tenuous proposition with Puerto Rico's present status as Commonwealth, or "Free Associated State." Although Puerto Rico is maintained as a colony under Commonwealth status, with the U.S. Congress having final jurisdiction over all legislation, it does have its own constitution, and, on paper, the question of status can still be altered. And so a body known as the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Puerto Rico — a committee which is a lot more influential than its name might suggest — has completed a report which it passed on to President Ford this past August 1.

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Rio Piedras rally commemorates the Oct. 30 Nationalist uprising.



Puerto Rico Libre!

in solidarity

AGAINST PERMANENT UNION — by Alfredo López

The facts, so obvious and simple, all come together now, and the picture is crystal clear. Here is an attempt, by the U.S. Government, to obliterate before August of 1976 the threat represented by the independence of Puerto Rico.

It is not difficult to see why Puerto Rico remains imperialist's major military base in this hemisphere, when the rest of the hemisphere is riddled with defiance and challenge to the once sacred authority of the American military apparatus (as is Panama, for example).

It remains a major economic base, yielding — with a fraction of the investment — more profit for U.S. business than Canada does.

Puerto Rico, the classical colony, the capital intensive economy, is the last hurrah for an imperialism which finds very few friends in the world. Accepting its liberation is, for Uncle Sam, like swallowing a rock.

The U.S. Government correctly sees two basic problems in "the Puerto Rican question": the growing struggle of Puerto Rico and the exploding international situation for its liberation.

Against the last, the U.S. has decided to make its stand in the United Nations by cutting the legs out from under the movement's position.

If the U.S. could advance incorporation of Puerto Rico into its legal and constitutional framework (deeper than the "Free Associated State" now is), imperialism's view of Puerto Rico as an "internal question" would be strengthened considerably.

This is the political purpose of the "Permanent Union" concept which the Ad-Hoc Committee has agreed upon, which Resident Commissioner Jaime Benítez is busy drawing up, which will go before the U.S. Congress sometime next year and possibly go to referendum in Puerto Rico during the summer.

The Committee alleges that its changes give Puerto Rico more freedom. But, from what has leaked out about the document, just the opposite takes place. For example, it is no greater freedom for a people of another country to vote for the President of the United States!

How serious are they about all this? If we go by the reaction of the Democratic Party, which, having a good chance to win the '76 elections, has given Puerto Rico 22 delegates to its national convention (the 26th largest delegation), they seem to be pretty serious. The Democrats don't give out votes at that level unless they think they are dealing with a constituency.

But there are a few contradictions — the largest being the powerful independence movement and its certain attempts to stop that referendum from happening.

At this moment, the Yankees know that persuasion is not the tactic, repression is. The illegalization of the National Workers Union, the repression of many strikes, the anti-union Personnel Law, the hysterical re-bidding of the labor movement by the Puerto Rican governor all indicate that repression will certainly be concentrated on the labor movement which has become one of the principle opponents of Commonwealth policy.

But there will be no stopping there.

It has already started, of course. Harassment, arrests, kidnappings by police, all kinds of brutality, repeated threats and heightened, almost frenzied surveillance — the context in which the independence movement is now working. And vicious repression will be the government policy in the coming months.

It will be large, sweeping, a campaign, planned from Washington to eliminate the independence movement.

Here in the United States, the role of those who agree with independence is clearly to struggle against that "Permanent Union" bill being passed through Congress and struggle to keep the U.S. repressive agencies from continuing and widening their repression of the movement. Success at this would allow the movement to continue its tremendous growth, allow those discussions at the U.N. to pass a resolution declaring the Commonwealth government an illegitimate authority and allow history to take its course toward the full liberation of Puerto Rico.

DEMAND FREEDOM FOR NATIONALIST 5

A MESSAGE FROM LOLITA LEBRON

I wish to express my deepest thanks to everyone of the organizations representing the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee. The formation of your National Board in Solidarity with the Independence Movement of Puerto Rico is very important to my Country's struggle. It stands as a testimony of your concern and your efforts to eradicate injustice and therefore to strive by all means possible to bring about freedom and Nationalhood to our oppressed People.

From the prison I salute you with the great hope of Liberation.

Your sister in struggle,

Lolita Lebron

Alfredson, September 12, 1975



High school students commemorating the 1950 Nationalist Insurrection.

On October 30, 1960, Puerto Rican Nationalists staged eight simultaneous attacks in Puerto Rico and the United States to focus U.S. and world attention on their peoples' demand for independence. All but one attack, including a Nov. 1 attack on Blair House, temporary residence of President Harry S. Truman, was put down by police and U.S. military forces.

In Jayuya, a small town in Puerto Rico's central mountain range, Nationalists under the direction of Blanca Canales, raised the flag of the independent Republic of Puerto Rico for two days.

Twenty-five years later, demonstrations on Oct. 30 and Nov. 1 demanded the unconditional release of five Nationalist prisoners — Lolita Lebrón, Rafael Cancel Miranda, Irvin Flores, Andres Figueroa Cordero, and Oscar Collazo — the longest held political prisoners in the Western Hemisphere. Supporters of independence for Puerto Rico commemorated the spirit of the 1950 uprising with over seventy activities both in the United States and Puerto Rico, where the largest number of simultaneous demonstrations in the island's history occurred.

At Jayuya, where leaders of most of the island's independence parties and movements paid homage to the martyrs of 1950, Juan Mari Bras, Secretary-General of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP), labeled the Nationalist attacks "as significant and historical" for the Puerto Rican struggle as the attack on La Moncada was for the Cuban revolution.

According to Mari Bras, the 1950 uprisings gave root to the "new struggle for independence" in Puerto Rico so that "the

Puerto Rican people can now establish for the first time the possibility of organizing and developing a struggle... towards the independence of our country and the construction of a new society in this land."

Earlier in the day, Jacinto Rivera Perez, President of the Nationalist Party told the crowd gathered in Jayuya that the 1950 uprising "did not end on October 30." The revolution is on its way and there's no one who can stop it," he said.

He called on the island's independentistas to "bring all their resources to the struggle for the benefit of the Puerto Ricans of the future."

Don Jacinto was also present for activities in New York City on November 1, where a march and rally sponsored by the Committee for the Freedom of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Prisoners drew an estimated crowd of 1,000 to the United Nations. Other speakers included Carlos Feliciano, William Kunstler; Jose "Che" Velazquez, Secretary of the New York Zone of the PSP; and Ramon Figueroa of Resistencia Puertorriqueña. There was music, and greetings were read from Lolita Lebron and Oscar Collazo, as well as numerous statements of solidarity.

Two other November 1 Coalition activities took place simultaneously in San Francisco and Chicago.

In San Francisco the Puerto Rican and Nationalist Party flags were hoisted in front of the Federal Building where 200 spirited demonstrators demanded unconditional amnesty for the Nationalist prisoners. Speakers from the PRSC, PSP, Prairie Fire Organizing Committee, the National Lawyers Guild and representatives of several prison action groups addressed the crowd. The demonstration, the first major one in the Bay Area around the independence of Puerto Rico in a year, also included cultural presentations.

In Chicago approximately 450 people rallied in front of the downtown Federal Building. The demonstrators heard speeches by representatives from the PRSC, PSP, National Lawyers Guild, CASA and several other organizations, among them Myrna Lopez, the principal of an alternative high school recently named for Rafael Cancel Miranda. RL/RB



Demonstration at U.N. Nov. 1 demands freedom for five Nationalists.

ERRATA

In the October edition of *Puerto Rico Libre!* we stated that "80% of Puerto Rico's government employees staged a 24-hour work-stoppage to protest a proposed personnel bill, *Ley de Personal*..." The sentence should have read "80% (52,800) of Puerto Rico's unionized government employees..."

It is precisely this sector of unionized workers (actually around 35% of all government employees) which has fought some of the longest and most militant strikes in the past few years.

Puerto Rico Libre! is published monthly by the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee, an organization which supports the national liberation struggle of Puerto Rico and self-determination for Puerto Rican people.

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FREE THE VICTORIA THREE

LOS TRES DE LA VICTORIA

Fueron rompiendo con su canto, la mañana descubriendo la vida, con sus ojos de rabia descubriendo con su verdad, la esperanza y descubriendo las cosas, con nuevas palabras Llegó el día en que las asombras, se asomaron y ustedes en la inmensidad, se intermaron buscar fondo en lugares sinestros y se arriesgaron, a perderse en el silencio

Sus rostros lo dicen, no importa lo que venga. La victoria es de todos, no importa lo que hagan. El triunfo está cerca, no importa la muerte. Siempre hay motivaciones, para por la revolución, somar la guerra. Unidos no están vivos, Angel "Tristes son los olvidados." "Imágenes de hombres, en vida enterrados." Unidos no están vivos, rostros sin tiempo. "Manténganse firmes," Raúl, tus palabras no olvidemos.

Rostros que se afirman en el horizonte, combatiendo la enfermedad y la ignorancia. Rostros que definen, el presente los rostros de los Tres de La Victoria.

(repente)

Sus rostros lo dicen...

(Doblado)

Rostros que se afirman en el horizonte combatiendo la enfermedad y la ignorancia.

Rostros que definen el presente.

Los rostros de Johnny, Raúl y Angel, los Tres de La Victoria.

Letra: Arminio Núñez

Música: José Valdéz

THE VICTORIA THREE*

They came breaking through the morning with its song discovering life, with your angry eyes bringing back hope with its truth and describing things with new words

The day came when the asombrados appeared who were placed in the immense darkness you touched the depths of sinister places and you took the chance of becoming lost in silence

Your faces say it

no matter what comes.

The victory belongs to all,

no matter what they do.

Victory is near,

regardless of death.

There is always desire,

for the revolution, we are the war.

You are not sad, Angel

"The sad are the forgotten."

"Images of men buried alive."

You are not sad, nor are we

"Stay Firm," Raúl

we don't forget your words.

Faces that are steady on the horizon

fighting sickness and ignorance.

Faces that define the present

The faces of Johnny, Raúl and Angel,

the Victoria Three.

Words: Arminio Núñez

Musica: José Valdéz

*This translation is literal and has NOT been adapted to the musical score.

This moving poetic and musical salute to the Victoria Three (see Up to Date this issue) was composed by Arminio Núñez and José Valdéz, two young artists who are members of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP).

Arminio Núñez, born in Manatí, Puerto Rico in 1947, holds a bachelor's degree in Philosophy and Literature from the University of Puerto Rico. Until very recently, he managed "Libro Libre," a Manhattan bookstore specializing in revolutionary Puerto Rican writings. He is currently in Puerto Rico recuperating from an illness.

José Valdéz, born in Maunabo, Puerto Rico in 1948, has been actively involved in writing and playing music for the past 10 years. He has participated in several musical groups both in New York and Puerto Rico. Currently, he is working in the Secretariat of Information and Propaganda of the PSP and is directing Tarraya, a new musical group which was formed by the PSP.

los 3 de la Victoria

Arminio Núñez
José Valdéz

Arminio Núñez
José Valdéz

The Puerto Rican Student Movement

A MAJOR ANTI-COLONIAL FORCE

Education in Puerto Rico, as a colonial institution, exists primarily to indoctrinate the Puerto Rican student with colonial ideology. The system aims at "Americanization" through the destruction of the Puerto Rican culture and identity, glorification of U.S. citizenship and the U.S. Constitution, and the imposition of the English language.

In the face of this, the Puerto Rican student movement evolved as a manifestation of rebellion against the colonization of Puerto Rico.

The student movement in Puerto Rico, and the later emergence of a Puerto Rican consciousness amongst Puerto Rican students in the United States, has its roots and history intertwined with the independence movement as a whole. This is because the ultimate goal of the student movement is the independence of Puerto Rico and the construction of a free and just society, as is demonstrated not only in the ideology but also by the militant actions the students have taken over the years.

The Demand for Spanish

One of the struggles of the Puerto Rican student movement was directed against the imposition, since the U.S. invasion in 1898, of English as the official language in the schools. The National Federation of Puerto Rican Students (NFPS), one of the first student organizations, participated in the struggle to reinstate Spanish. And in 1946, public sentiment forced both Houses of the Puerto Rican legislature to approve Project 51, which would have done so.

The Project was promptly vetoed by President Harry Truman and the problem of language in the schools was not solved until 1949 by an administrative decree from Education Commissioner Marino Villarronga.

Militant Demands/Brutal Repression

The formation of the FNEP during the 1930's, as a representative student organization, paved the ground for the contemporary student movement. The major issues at hand were a university reform, which would create student councils, thus giving the students more participation in the decision-making process within the university, and the revolt against compulsory military service in the U.S. armed forces. Essentially these issues have proved to be consistent rallying points in the history of the student movement.

In 1948, the students went on strike, and kept the University of Puerto Rico closed for one academic semester. Their demands were based on the necessity for more student participation and a viable university reform. The colonial government responded by eliminating the student councils, which were in fact instituted just six years previously by the University Law of 1944, and by prohibiting all political meetings, pickets, and demonstrations. Jaime Benítez, currently Puerto Rico's non-voting Commissioner in the U.S. House of Representatives and then rector of the University, proceeded to suspend and expel en masse all those students thought to be "responsible" for the strike. Those "responsible" students totaled more than three hundred.

Simultaneously, the colonial government instituted the entrance exam, which serves as a screening instrument against students of low socio-economic or "inadequate" educational backgrounds.

All these repressive measures were attempts to destroy the student movement via violent intimidation. Unfortunately they only acted as a springboard in creating new resistance on the part of the students and the Puerto Rican people in general.

Since the formation of the University Student Federation for

Independence (FUPI) in 1956, and the Pro Independence Movement (MPI) in 1959, the student movement has defined its ideology and strategy more clearly.

The FUPI continued to fight for students' rights and university reform, however they began to concentrate their efforts on a more political plane; the struggle for the eradication of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) on campus, and against the draft. The MPI (the predecessor of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party) contributed decisively to the political direction of the FUPI, as well as to the formation of the social base of the contemporary independence movement.

The 1960's began a new stage for the student movement in Puerto Rico. It was also during the 60's that the universities were in turmoil all across the United States, and Puerto Rican students on the "mainland" began to take part in the militant student struggles.

Although the Puerto Rican student movement in the United States surged from different conditions, its demands were similar to those of the students in Puerto Rico. The Puerto Rican student movement in the United States was born out of the civil rights movement, the Black liberation struggle, and the North American protests against the Vietnamese War. The initial formation was organized around national identity, and the struggle for democratic rights within a racist and classist society. The evolution of the movement has been towards a more anti-imperialist orientation, with a sense of solidarity with the students in Puerto Rico, and a more profound understanding of their reality and reason for being within the United States: the colonization of Puerto Rico.

In Puerto Rico, the students began to organize militant resistance to the militarization of the universities, (i.e. ROTC). During 1969 the students staged a protest against the ROTC presence on campuses, which ended in arrests of several draft resisters, the burning of the ROTC facilities by the angry students, and police intervention in the universities. Although the academic senate had voted to eradicate the ROTC programs from the campuses, the colonial government overruled their petition, and maintained the programs on campus. However, "partial participation was to be voluntary" as opposed to compulsory.

Perhaps the most tragic event took place on March 4, 1970 during the continued protests against ROTC, when Antonio Martínez, a student, was killed as a result of the Riot Squad being called in to control a demonstration.

One year later, on March 11, 1971, the students successfully

Students mourn the death of Antonio Martínez.



defended themselves against the armed attack of the Riot Squad and ROTC cadets, in the battle that ensued two policemen were killed and one ROTC cadet.

New Unity

This victory was further consolidated by the university strike of October 1973. The strike encompassed all University of Puerto Rico campuses, many regional (2-year), and private colleges. The demands were for more inclusive student-faculty participation, the transformation of the university guards from "riot police" to student-worker guards, and a wage increase for the university workers.

The strength of this event lay in the solidarity between the student, worker and faculty bodies, unparalleled in the history of the Puerto Rican student movement.

This new unity evoked a response from the colonial government, characterized by numerous suspensions of student leaders, violations of students' rights, and the presence of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) on campus.

In September, 1975, three leaders of FUPI at the Humacao branch of the University of Puerto Rico were jailed and the administration banned for thirty days all types of demonstrations and the circulation of student publications. Luis F. Coss, President of FUPI at Humacao, was subsequently issued an arrest warrant for the "attempted murder" of a university guard.

The bond between the students, faculty and university workers was further demonstrated on October 8 of this year when students and teachers of the University of Puerto Rico supported the one-day general work-stoppage called by municipal workers to protest the new Personnel Law. University workers are government employees and are directly affected by this repressive legislation which labor leaders claim is designed to destroy trade unions in the public sector and eventually the private sector as well.



One of many student protests.

The growing alliance between the student movement on the island and in the United States with a broader base of community-worker participation has given impetus to the continuing struggles of the students. U.S. colonialism is becoming threatened more each day as the independence movement gains strongholds in Puerto Rico, in the United States, and internationally.

The Puerto Rican student has been and will continue to be a pillar of strength to the independence movement for a free and just Puerto Rico; *hasta la victoria!*

FG

box of facts

Some Events in the History of the Student Movement in Puerto Rico

1930's: The National Federation of Puerto Rican Students (FNPR) is formed.

1942: FNPR participates with the Nationalist Party in a revolt against compulsory military service in the U.S. armed forces.

1944: The University Law of 1944 (Number 135) reorganizes the university structure; creating new departments and student councils.

1948: University strike demands university reform guaranteeing student rights and the democratization of the university institutions. In response, the colonial government bans Student Councils and prohibits all political activity on campus.

1949: An administrative decree by Education Commissioner Marino Villaronga reinstates Spanish as the official language of the schools.

1956: University Student Federation for Independence (FUPI) is formed.

1964: High School Student Federation for Independence (FSEI) is formed.

In October, police clash with students demonstrating for university reform.

1966: University Law of 1966 (Number 1) centralizes authority in Board of Higher Education (BHE); reformation of student councils, with no vote in decision-making process.

1967: Students are jailed for draft resistance. Students protest ROTC on campus and burn ROTC facilities. Again police intervene and clash with students.

1969: BHE decides ROTC cannot drill on campuses, however ROTC facilities remain.

March 4, 1970: Students protest against ROTC on campus; Antonia Martinez is killed by police.

March 11, 1971: Students successfully defend themselves against ROTC and Riot Squad Attack. Two police and one ROTC cadet are killed.

Oct. 15, 1973: Students, workers, and faculty strike and close down all University of Puerto Rico campuses as well as many 2-year and private colleges.

Sept., 1975: Hundreds of students in Humacao protest the jailing of three student leaders of the FUPI.

As part of the escalating repression against the student movement, Luis F. Coss, President of the FUPI at Humacao, is later charged with the attempted murder of a campus guard.

Oct. 8, 1975: Students, workers and faculty at the University support the one-day general work-stoppage called to protest the new Personnel Law.

ERRATA: In last month's Box of Facts on "The History of the Nationalist Party" we printed the date of a massive strike by super industry workers led by Abilio Campos as 1933. The correct date is 1934.

U.S. STRATEGY, continued from p. 1

The Ad Hoc Committee proposes to change the present "legal" status of Puerto Rico and establish what it calls a "Compact of Permanent Union between Puerto Rico and the United States." The proposed "compact" offers a few inconsequential cosmetic changes in the present set-up, such as adding a non-voting commissioner from Puerto Rico to the U.S. Senate in addition to the non-voting commissioner who presently serves in the House of Representatives.

But needless to say, it does not abridge one iota of the real power the U.S. exercises over Puerto Rico. What it does do, however, is to introduce the concept of "permanent union" which can then be used by Washington not only in the international diplomatic arena, but also as the legal basis for declaring all pro-independence activities "treasonous."

Behind the Change

What are the factors that have forced Washington to make this significant shift in its colonial policy in Puerto Rico in almost a quarter of a century?

The most immediate cause has been the crisis in the U.S. economy — the severest recession in more than 30 years — which has had a particularly devastating effect on Puerto Rico. Unemployment on the island affects more than a third of the Puerto Rican workers. Seventy-one percent of all Puerto Rican people depend on food stamps to live. And the Associated Free — the "governmental" apparatus — is on the verge of bankruptcy facing a worse fiscal crisis than New York City.

This has led to an intensification of class struggle and a spectacular growth in the independence movement as more and more Puerto Ricans come to see that their condition of poverty and exploitation is bound up inextricably with national oppression. The lengthy and resolute strike of the Cement Workers and the high level of struggle of government workers, typified by the unprecedented work stoppage of 50,000 public employees in early October, are but two examples of the new working class militancy sweeping the island. At the same time, the independence forces have surged to the fore as the genuine Puerto Rican patriots who can offer the only viable "solution" to the country's crisis.

The Fight for Bilingual Education

A BLOW AGAINST CULTURAL IMPERIALISM

"Equal education has been a fraud. How can there exist equal education if some of the students are looked on as defective? The injuries of the Latin-American child have been inflicted by those who have claimed to teach and motivate him, who have, in reality, alienated him and destroyed his identity through the subtle rejection of his language, which nobody speaks, his culture which nobody understands, and ultimately him, whom nobody values." —David J. Sánchez, Testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee, 1970.

A kindergarten teacher in an East Harlem school told me, in connection with a study I was doing a few years ago, that four of her twenty children were "mute." "They have not said one word to me in six months and they don't appear to understand a word I say." "Do they talk to one another?" I asked. "Sure," was her reply. "They cackle to each other in Spanish all day." It has been an article of faith in our schools that if the teachers understood Spanish they would be irreparably harming the Spanish-speaking child.

When the U.S. captured Puerto Rico after defeating the Spanish rulers in 1898 and the autonomous government that

As the independence movement itself has grown, so international support has needed new levels of expression and solidarity. Independence forces are now accepted as the legitimate representatives of the Puerto Rican people in many conferences and by organizations of third world and non-aligned peoples. The debates in the United Nations further reflect this process. This international solidarity reached a high point with the International Conference in Solidarity with Puerto Rican Independence in Havana this September.

Particularly important was the recent endorsement by Cuba of the "Dorcas Doctrine" which pointedly defines the oppression of Puerto Rico as a Latin American question and not an internal affair of the U.S.

Finally, the emergence of a firmly based solidarity movement in the U.S. for the first time — highlighted by the Madison Square Garden rally — has introduced another important element into the situation.

Until recently, the strategy of successive U.S. administrations toward Puerto Rico was one of "low profile." At the U.N., imperialist representatives wouldn't "dignify" the debate around Puerto Rico by even responding to the accusations of colonialism. To most U.S. citizens, there was only one Puerto Rico — the "vacation wonderland." And for Puerto Rico itself, the reality was forced emigration from the island, incentives for business investments, the spurious "operation bootstrap," a scheme which probably did more to loot Puerto Rico of its resources than 50 years of imperialism before it, and a classical system of imperialist suppression of national identity.

But it is no longer possible for the U.S. government to conduct its Puerto Rican business as usual. The struggle of the Puerto Rican people themselves, together with the insubstantial international support, has grown to the point where Washington must wage a counter offensive.

This new strategy by U.S. imperialism is clearly a sign of deep weakness and not strength. It is a direct response to the independence movement, the workers movement, and the international movement of solidarity. But it requires new and special efforts on the part of the supporters of Puerto Rican independence in the U.S.

IS

had been established only a few months earlier, all teaching in Spanish in the schools of Puerto Rico was abolished. Spanish was banned in the schools until as late as 1948. That colonialist tradition carried over into the schools of the U.S. as the Puerto Rican migration grew in the 1950's, although classes in Polish, Yiddish and Italian had been approved in the turn-of-the-century schools under the impact of European immigration. In the city of Buffalo, for instance, elementary schools taught in Polish as their opening.

Similarly, when the U.S. captured the territory that now comprises four states in the Southwest in the Mexican-American war of aggression in 1846-48, the original settlers were immediately designated as "foreigners." In all the occupied territory, Spanish was forbidden, and in some places even the Spanish language was banned on the playgrounds or on the streets near the school. A Mexican-American teacher in Crystal City, Texas, was indicted for teaching a high school class in Spanish as recently as October, 1970.

It was not until 1975 with the U.S. Supreme Court decision in the *Lau v. Nichols* case that the right of the child to bilingual/

Continued on p. 10

Victoria Three Sentence Reduced

Dominican Republic, Oct. 31 - After an eight hour hearing, the Court of Appeals in Santo Domingo reduced the sentence of Angel Gandía, Raul García, and Johnny Sampson, all militants of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, from thirty to five years imprisonment.

The sentence reduction was greeted with enthusiasm by the independence movement. However, independence representatives stated that "nothing less than their release and repatriation to Puerto Rico is acceptable."

The campaign for their release has won widespread support beyond Puerto Rico and the independence movement itself. After many months of public pressure and demonstrations, Representative Herman Badillo (D-Bronx) announced that Robert Hurwitz, U.S. Ambassador to the Dominican Republic, had agreed to approach President Joaquín Balaguer on behalf of the three.

Commenting on the long overdue actions of the U.S. government, Badillo emphasized that "the State Department only responds to pressure."

FLASH!

As we go to press, a decree stating that the Victoria Three will be deported Dec. 23 has just been made public. The decree, issued by Joaquín Balaguer, undoubtedly comes as a result of the tremendous international campaign which has been waged to win their release.

See the next issue of *Puerto Rico Libre!* for more details.

The principles of Bandoleros were once famous for their quality and size. But the contamination that a nearby pharmaceutical plant has spread, has had disastrous effects on their cultivation.



Workers' Solidarity with P.R.

Caracas, Venezuela, Oct. 28 - The fifth congress of the Latin American Confederation of Communication Workers (CLATC), with representation from seventeen Latin American nations, approved by unanimous consent, a resolution to support the independence of Puerto Rico.

The congress took a militant stand condemning the repression waged against the workers in Puerto Rico by the United States government, and indicated their "total repudiation" of the new Personnel Law, which attempts to destroy the labor movement.

The CLATC also said they would send a telegram to President Gerald Ford demanding the immediate release of the five Puerto Rican Nationalist political prisoners.

Two New PRSC Chapters

New York, Nov. 6 - The Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee (PRSC), has just opened two new chapters in Amherst, MA and Philadelphia, bringing the nationwide count of chapters to fifteen, according to Executive Secretary Alfredo López.

"The work of the PRSC has been instrumental in making the issue of Puerto Rican independence a major concern for many progressive people in this country," stated López.

"We expect the PRSC will have at least 25 chapters by the first anniversary of its founding Conference next March, and we have tripled its membership."

Resolutions Adopted in Berlin

Berlin, GDR, Oct. 20 - The Plenary Session of the World Congress of International Women's Year proclaimed their militant solidarity with and demanded the unconditional release of political prisoner Lolita Lebrón.

The assembly, attended by delegations from more than 135 countries and 75 international organizations, also adopted resolutions supporting the Puerto Rican independence movement.

Bombings Hit U.S. Targets

U.S., Oct. 27 - At 2 A.M. this morning a series of bombs exploded in New York, Washington, and Chicago.

In a communiqué to the press, the Armed Forces of Puerto Rican National Liberation (FALN), claimed responsibility and demanded "the immediate independence of Puerto Rico and the unconditional release of the five Puerto Rican Nationalist prisoners: Oscar Collazo, Lolita Lebrón, Rafael Cancel Miranda, Andrés Figueroa Cordero, and Irvin Flores, as well as other Puerto Rican political prisoners in Yankee colonial and neo-colonial prisons."

The targets of the bombings all represented centers of United States economic and political power structures. For example, the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, the offices of the State Dept. in Washington, D.C., and financial centers such as branches of the Chase Manhattan Bank and the Sears Tower in Chicago. No one was injured by the blasts.

In a commentary published the day after the bombings, Ramón Arbona, editor of the pro-independence daily *Claridad* and a member of the national political commission of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, wrote: "There is terrorism that alienates the masses, isolates, weakens, and frightens them. And there is terrorism, on the other hand, that paralyzes the enemy, weakens it and frightens it, preventing it from attacking in times when the masses advance. . . . We do not need the first type in our struggle. . . . The second we will have to use often in our path toward liberation."

"Yesterday's bombs did not yet attain that level because they do not constitute part of a complete struggle in which the masses violently erupt into history. But neither can they be condemned. They constitute one of the multiple expressions of a pursued people who are rising up in ever greater steps to put an end to their oppression."

Against New Law

Puerto Rico, Oct. 19 - Three hundred labor leaders and union delegates met today and resolved to develop a broad educational campaign to explain the effects of the new Personnel Law.



Labor leaders and union representatives met on Oct. 19 and decided to challenge the new Personnel Law.

The Personnel Law, recently signed into law by Governor Colón, has been described by union leaders as an attack on the very existence of labor unions in government agencies and corporations.

A one-day general workstoppage by 80% of all unionized Government employees last Oct. 8 demonstrated the workers' firm opposition to the law.

The new law will create a Central Office of Personnel Administration, directed by an appointee of the governor, which will adopt regulations to be enforced throughout the Public Service system. The law specifies that job classifications, recruitment and selection, promotion, transfer and demotion, and training will be decided according to the merit of the individual, through each government agency.

In addition, the law is supposed to provide job security "to those employees who satisfy the criteria of productivity, efficiency, order, and discipline. . . . However, in all of these decisions and actions, the participation of labor unions is not mentioned."

Cement Workers Out Ten Months

Ponce, Oct. 19 - At an assembly held today the Operations and Cement Workers Union (OCWU), now entering its tenth month on strike against the Puerto Rican Cement Co., decided to press the National Labor Relations Board to hold representational elections at P.R. Cement.

Since the strike began, the Seafarers International Union and two other unions, in compliance with the colonial government, have attempted to raid the OCWU - an unprecedented attack on labor union solidarity.

The OCWU is confident that an election will show that they represent the workers and will thus influence the company to negotiate.

In another development, two cement workers, Ramón Martínez and José Luis Collazo, arrested in October on charges of possession of explosives, were released on bail reduced from \$50,000 to \$5,000.

Efraín Fernández, President of the OCWU, termed their case another attempted frame-up against the striking workers.

Support for the cement workers continues to grow both in Puerto Rico and the U.S. And as time goes on, our continued support is more crucial than ever. Support a striking worker with a contribution! Write to the PRSC, P.O. Box 319, Cooper Station, NYC 10003, for more information.

Panama-Puerto Rico: Common Struggle

Panama City, Oct. 10-19 - The PRSC was represented on the first delegation of anti-imperialist North Americans ever to visit Panama.

The purpose of the trip was to develop North American understanding of and support for the struggle of the Panamanian people for sovereignty over their Canal.

The Torrijos government, which came to power through a coup in October, 1968, has taken a strong anti-colonialist stand. It has unified Panamians around the demand for a new treaty ending U.S. control of the Canal "in perpetuity."

For 72 years, the Canal Zone has been an enclave of the U.S., dividing the Panamanian people in half. In addition, the 14 U.S. military bases - illegally located in the supposedly neutral Zone - have been the staging area for attacks on

Panama, Cuba, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic as well as a major training ground for troops sent to Vietnam.

Upon its return, the delegation began a campaign of education and lobbying for a new treaty. A National Committee for Panamanian Sovereignty, modeled on the PRSC, will be founded next spring.

Our delegate, Farns Lobenstein, Coordinator of the West Side Chapter in N.Y.C., is available to speak on Panama and on its close ties to the Puerto Rican struggle.

Times Chronicles Crisis

New York, Oct. 15 - "The 25 years of industrial growth under Operation Bootstrap have come to a close," announced the *New York Times* in a front page article today which details the economic crisis in Puerto Rico.

The article goes on to describe many of the assertions that the Puerto Rican independence movement has been making for some time, and which the *Times* has either ignored or ridiculed in its editorials up until very recently.

For example, the article points out that unemployment, a problem Bootstrap set out to solve, is higher today than the 12.9% rate in 1950. Today's official figure is 19.9% (August) - or "about 40% when room is made for thousands who are not included in statistics because they have given up looking for work."

The picture which is portrayed is certainly devastating in its catalog of economic and social deprivation. Has one of the principle establishment dailies changed its views on Puerto Rican independence? Hardly. What it has done is to admit that the economic losses of the U.S.-based industries, which control 80% of the Puerto Rican economy, are very serious, and that colonial policy in Puerto Rico is in deep trouble.



Coming next month . . .

Firsthand report on the historic second Congress of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION, continued from P. 7

bicultural education was grudgingly conceded. This case arose in San Francisco, where Chinese parents sued to have teachers who could understand their children. The lower court, which was reversed, stood fast behind white supremacy: the children's failure to learn was their own fault, not the school's. The judge said: "the result of deficiencies created by the appellants (the children) themselves in failing to learn the English language."

Limited Programs/Limited Education

Two decades of heightened struggle for bilingual education by Latin, Chicano, Chinese and Native American parents had brought only meager results. Where state law provided for it, and here in New York City, bilingual education was largely limited to "English as a Second Language" programs, where Spanish-speaking children were removed from their regular classes for periods during the day or week, losing out on learning the subject matter, and given training in English, mostly by North American teachers who understood neither the Spanish language nor the Spanish-speaking child. Only three fully bilingual schools were in operation by January, 1975, serving only 1800 students.

The impact of this imperialist policy on the education of the children is devastating. Spanish-speaking children have the highest dropout rates, with 60 to 65 percent leaving school before high school graduation, unable to read or write in either Spanish or English.

In the Black and Puerto Rican schools in N.Y.C., the average eighth grader is more than two and a half years behind, i.e. "functionally illiterate" by the U.S. Army definition, unable to read a newspaper, fill out a job application or apply for a driver's permit. In the predominantly Latin schools scores are even lower. Being taught in their own language by teachers who understand and believe in the children is absolutely essential if this massive, criminal educational neglect is to be reversed.

The New York City Plan

In New York City, the first fully bilingual school was set up by Luis Fuentes in 1968 when he was the one and only Puerto Rican principal in any of the 894 public schools in the City. He was free to do it because the District was community-controlled for a brief few years before Albert Shanker led the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) in a bitter 45-day strike against Black and Puerto Rican communities, and community control was destroyed.

A significant breakthrough took place in 1974 with the *Aspira Consent Decree*. U.S. District Judge Marvin E. Frankel P.R.S.C.

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upheld the principle that bilingual education is a basic right for non-English-speaking students. The case of *Aspira v. Board of Education* was closed when the Board gave in and agreed to provide full bilingual education to all Hispanic students who could learn more effectively in their native language. The Decree was supposed to go into full force in September, 1975.

Bilingual education has four components: 1) all subject courses such as math, science and social studies are taught in the child's dominant language as well as in English after the student has sufficient fluency in English; 2) an intensive program of reading, writing and speaking in English is provided; 3) the child's command of spoken and written Spanish is strengthened, so that the child becomes fully literate and fluent in both languages; and 4) the child's cultural heritage is studied and accepted by the school.

Inherent in the bilingual education concept is that the teachers not only be fluent in Spanish but that they be intimately familiar and appreciative of the cultural content of the child's community and heritage. This fact alarms Albert Shanker, mastermind of the strategy of control of school jobs through racism. The Court had ordered that bilingual teachers be hired from a separate list, so that in any firings, seniority would not work to remove the newly-hired Latin teachers from the programs. Last Spring, in a surprise ploy, Shanker got the Board of Education to nullify the Court order. This enables North American teachers, by taking a six-week course in Spanish and by being certified by the Board of Examiners, to receive "ancillary certificates" and to go on to the bilingual hiring list, retaining *all their original seniority*, and bypassing the rigid, demanding examinations that all other bilingual teachers are required to pass.

The latest twist of the screw came with the recent strike settlement. Shanker has declared that with citywide seniority instituted, he will see to it that fired guidance counsellors, who know not much more than how to say "*Como está usted*," and his corps of ancillary certificate teachers will have first call on the bilingual teaching jobs.

This is the time for the sharpest alertness on the part of teachers and the students themselves. The program must be introduced without regard to budget cuts, according to the Court Order. But whether they will be truly bilingual/bicultural in the full spirit of love and respect for the Spanish language, the culture of the students and for the students themselves depends on the vigilance and the militancy of the parents in each school and of the bilingual staffs who must keep the community informed. The next few months are critical.

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